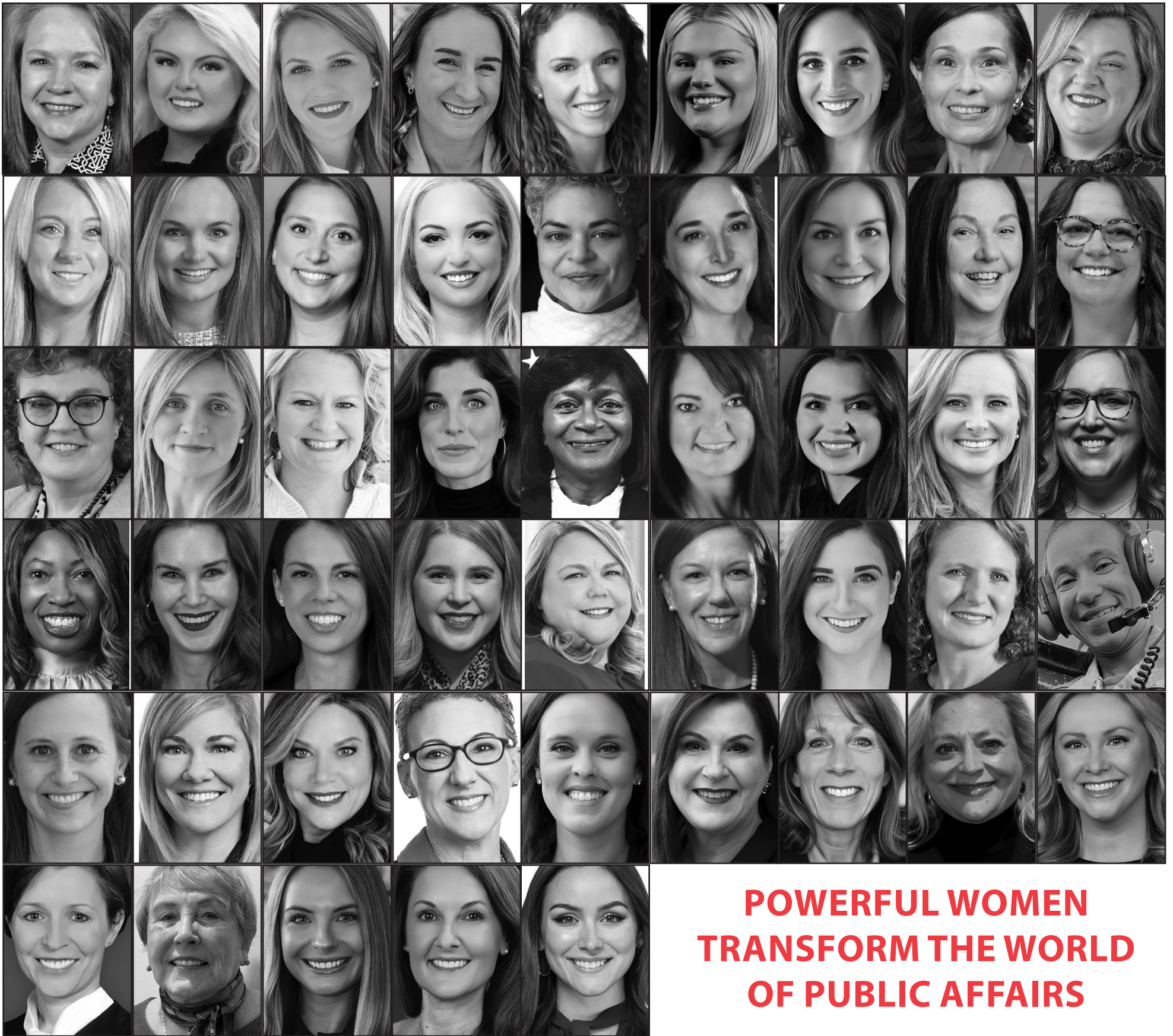


The Kentucky Gazette's
2025 NOTABLE WOMEN
IN KENTUCKY POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT





CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
**NOTABLE
WOMEN**
OF OUR TEAM

**SARAH
WOOD**

**REBECCA
HARTSOUGH**

**JULIE
BABBAGE**



A Note from the Publisher

Dear Gazette Readers,

Once again, we are honored to present 50 Kentucky women whose work in the public sphere represents meritocracy and excellence. At a time when some public figures question the ability of women to perform to rigorous standards in the academic, military, and professional worlds, you will read here about women who prove that assertion patently false.

Our Notable Women this year include Ph.D.-holding scholars, attorneys, advocates for businesses and causes, a journalist, public servants, and women who proudly served our nation in uniform.

With literally hundreds of years of combined experience, all 50 Notable Women have exceeded the standards set in their fields: They have received awards, commendations, and accolades from their communities, their institutions, their peers.

Many of this year's Notable Women work in and around Frankfort, where women hold positions of power, but that's generally not the case in other parts of the state. For example, only eight of Kentucky's 120 county judge executives (7%) are women, and two of them are figureheads in Fayette and Jefferson counties. Women serve as mayor in only three (15%) of the commonwealth's 20 largest cities – Lexington, Florence, and Erlanger.

At the state level, the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University says women's representation in state legislatures reached a record high after the 2024 election, with women holding 33.4% of state legislative seats across the U.S. The Kentucky House is on par with that figure – women serve in 33 of the 100 seats, or 33%. On the other side of the Capitol building, though, women make up 21% of the state Senate, holding eight of 38 seats (with one vacancy).

Two of Kentucky's seven constitutional officers (28%) are women – Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman and state Auditor Allison Ball. And

women make up 30% of the state's 10 executive branch cabinets: Secretary Rebecca Goodman, Energy and Environment Cabinet; Holly Johnson, Finance and Administration Cabinet; and Mary Elizabeth Bailey, Personnel Cabinet.

Women are the majority on the seven-member Kentucky Supreme Court, with Chief Justice Debra Hembree Lambert at the helm of the judicial branch. Kentucky is one of 20 states in which women are the majority on supreme court benches, according to the Brennen Center for Justice at New York University School of Law.

The Fourth Estate is working on parity, too. More women are covering Frankfort than in recent years, including reporters and editors from the Kentucky Lantern, the Courier Journal, the Lexington Herald Leader, WLEX, WUKY, Louisville Public Media, and, of course, The Kentucky Gazette.

Thank you reading the Gazette. Thank you for your support of ethical, independent journalism.

Laura Cullen Glasscock
Publisher and Editor

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AMY SULLIVAN ANDERSON**11TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

Originally from Greensburg, District Judge Amy Sullivan Anderson graduated from the University of Kentucky with a B.S. in family studies in 1990 and an MBA in 1992.

After a career in real estate appraisal, she returned to UK, receiving her juris doctor degree in 2000. She practiced at Bertram and Cox in Campbellsville while serving as assistant Taylor County attorney and assistant commonwealth's attorney. Anderson also served as the Green County master commissioner.

She was elected district judge for Green, Taylor, Marion, and Washington counties in 2006, and she presides as a special judge for the 11th Circuit Drug Court.

Anderson has served the court of justice on the Chief Justice's Drug Testing Task Force, the Judicial Workload Assessment Committee, and the District Judges Executive Committee for the Cumberland Region. She currently serves on the Court Facilities Standards Committee, the KBA Wellness Commission, the Continuing Judicial Education Commission and the Electronic Court Record Subcommittee.

Anderson served as secretary of the District Judges Association and co-chair of the District Judges Education Committee for 10 years. In 2023, she was elected to the Judicial Conduct Commission and was awarded the Judge Robert Heaton Award by her peers. Anderson is a founding board member of District Judges for a Better Commonwealth.

She gives her spare time to her church and the American Red Cross. She is married to Kirk and has one son, Ethan.

**MEGAN SPARROW ARNOLD****MCCARTHY STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS**

Megan Sparrow Arnold is a principal with McCarthy Strategic Solutions, with five years of experience in state and congressional public policy and community relations. Arnold advocates for clients across a broad range of sectors including health care, family and children's services, substance use addiction prevention and treatment, and transportation.

In her first year at MSS, Arnold successfully advocated for regulatory reform, achieving outcomes in election oversight, unemployment insurance, and transportation safety reforms.

Before joining MSS in 2024, Arnold worked for House Majority Leadership in the Kentucky House of Representatives. In this role, she served as a policy analyst and a communications specialist. Her policy focus while in the Kentucky House included health care, child welfare, and public assistance policy.

Before her time in the General Assembly, Arnold served as regional political director for U.S. Rep. Andy Barr's 2020 re-election campaign, for which she managed grassroots activities.

Additionally, Arnold supervised fundraising operations in the University of Kentucky's Office of Philanthropy, overseeing more than 50 students and 20 funds.

A Lawrenceburg native, Arnold was named a Trunzo Scholar and graduated with honors from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. She lives in Lexington with her husband, Wade.

**JULIE BABBAGE LAUNGANI****BABBAGE COFOUNDER**

Julie Babbage Laungani is recognized for her transformative and results-driven leadership that inspires collaboration and progress. A respected voice in health advocacy and across public policy decisions, she has guided major initiatives that have spurred progress in Kentucky and beyond, including national wins in two presidential administrations.

"Julie and the Babbage team sacrificed to rebuild diabetes national advocacy on their backs, creating a highly effective structure for exceptional impact," one top leader said. The Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition, for which Babbage Laungani served as executive director, continues to thrive. With this strong background in association management and grassroots mobilization, Babbage Laungani has built and guided high-impact networks toward meaningful change. This work spans many causes at Babbage Cofounder, from leading civic efforts to strengthen communities and overcome division to elevating local voices to the national stage for positive policy outcomes.

During the last Kentucky legislative session, Babbage Laungani guided and encouraged support for important causes in technology, aviation, and energy. She helps manage Babbage Cofounder, a 30-year-old firm carried forward by a new generation of leadership.

A mentor and trusted colleague, Babbage Laungani says she is inspired by working closely with two other Notable Women – Dr. Rebecca Hartsough and Sarah Wood. Babbage Laungani is paving the way for continued, lasting legacies. This is also true in her evolving role as mother, a calling she deeply cherishes.

**STEPHANIE BLAIN****PALMER ENGINEERING**

Stephanie Blain, P.E., is vice president of Palmer Engineering, where she leads the firm's Lexington office and manages a broad range of civil and environmental engineering projects across Kentucky.

Since joining Palmer after graduating summa cum laude from the University of Kentucky with a degree in civil engineering, Blain has advanced through the firm's leadership ranks by combining technical excellence with a collaborative, solutions-driven approach.

After earning her professional engineer license in 2011, she was promoted to project manager and in 2019 was named an associate principal. In 2025, she was promoted to vice president, becoming the only woman to hold that position in the company's history, a testament to her strategic leadership, mentorship, and commitment to excellence. Known for taking on the most complex and challenging projects, she is widely respected for her dedication and character. Her favorite work focuses on nature-based solutions that benefit the environment, improve water quality, and reduce pollutants in Kentucky's waterways.

Blain serves as president of the Kentucky Society of Professional Engineers and was named the National Society of Professional Engineers' National Young Engineer of the Year in 2021. She is an executive branch lobbyist, and she is a strong advocate for infrastructure investment, professional licensure, and STEM education, inspiring the next generation to lead through service and ethics. A Lexington native, Blain lives there with her husband and their three children.



SARAH BOWLING
CORNERSTONE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Sarah Bowling joined Cornerstone Government Affairs' Kentucky team as a vice president in December 2023, bringing with her a decade of experience at the intersection of public policy, political strategy, and the lived realities of governing in the commonwealth.

Known for her ability to build genuine, lasting relationships across the aisle, Bowling is respected for pairing policy depth with a collaborative style that keeps conversations productive and people at the center of the work.

At Cornerstone, she partners with clients throughout Kentucky to navigate complex policy landscapes, strengthen community and economic development efforts, and build coalitions that move big ideas forward. Her approach blends strategic insight with an instinct for connection – attributes that have become hallmarks of her work in Frankfort.

Before joining Cornerstone Government Affairs, Bowling served as a senior policy adviser to the Kentucky House Democratic Leadership Office. In this role, she provided analysis, committee coverage, and research that informed caucus strategy during multiple legislative sessions, grounding her work in a strong grasp of statutes, administrative processes, and the rhythms of the Kentucky General Assembly.

A graduate of Florida Atlantic University and Eastern Kentucky University's Master of Public Administration program, Bowling blends academic training with hands-on legislative experience and a relationship-forward style. She is committed to a policymaking environment that is thoughtful, accessible, and – above all – built on trust.



SARAH BRADY
FSH Works

As the organization's president, Sarah Brady leads FSH Works, the workforce-development division of Family Scholar House, where she oversees innovative initiatives that bridge education, employment, and self-sufficiency for Kentucky families.

Under her leadership, FSH Works has expanded from a local program to a statewide network empowering student-parents, individuals in recovery, and adults re-entering the workforce through purpose-driven training and service models, such as REAL Opportunities and FSH HealthCorps.

Rooted in the mission of transforming crisis into self-sufficiency, Brady's work integrates overcoming barriers with career advancement; helping families not only secure stability but thrive in sustainable careers.

The programs she oversees engage employers, colleges, and community partners across the commonwealth to build pathways to health care, peer-support, and other high-demand fields, all while reinforcing the economic health of Kentucky communities.

What began as a Kentucky-born model is now expanding to multiple states, earning recognition for its data-driven impact and replicable systems that strengthen families, reduce public-assistance dependence, and advance the state's workforce priorities.

Brady regularly collaborates with Kentucky state leaders, policymakers, and education partners to advocate for policies that support student-parents and align workforce pipelines with the needs of local economies. She remains steadfast in her mission to build systems that honor both potential and perseverance.



Congratulations

MANDY SIMPSON MARLER PRINCIPAL

Baldwin Consulting celebrates Mandy Simpson Marler for being recognized as a 2025 Notable Women in Kentucky Politics and Government.

Mandy works each day to drive consensus and develop programmatic solutions with Legislative and Executive branch leaders in the child care, housing affordability, child welfare quality, behavioral healthcare access, and nonprofit sector impact areas.



JULIA BRIGHT**COMMONWEALTH ALLIANCES**

Julia Bright is an experienced political operative who has served in senior roles in numerous legislative and statewide races where she's built a network across the commonwealth.

In 2012, Bright served as the political director for the Kentucky House Republican Campaign Caucus Committee, for which she managed more than 25 key state legislative races. She began her work as a contract lobbyist in 2013, focusing on health care, telecommunications, and financial services. She spent the next three years in the Koch Network as the Kentucky state director for Americans for Prosperity.

Her work at the local, legislative, and executive level on labor reform has made her a credible voice on the issue. She has been published in the Wall Street Journal and Forbes on the impact on Kentuckians of right-to-work and the repeal of the prevailing wage. In 2017, her legislative efforts leading AFP Kentucky on school choice were recognized by the Policy Innovators in Education Network as the part of the Best Ensemble award for the Kentucky charter school bill.

Bright started her own firm, Bright Strategies, in October of 2017 and immediately engaged in a strategic partnership with Commonwealth Alliances, where she was named partner in 2024. She graduated from Western Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and psychology. She and her children, Piper and Pierce, live in Glenview with their Great Dane, Sergeant Pepper.

**AMY BURKE****OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Amy Burke is the chief of Child Support Services in the Office of Attorney General Russell Coleman. She previously served as the assistant deputy attorney general over the Criminal Division for Attorney General Daniel Cameron.

Before starting with the OAG, Burke was the chief prosecutor in the Kenton County Attorney's Office, where she specialized in prosecuting cases involving serious injuries to children, dependency abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

Burke's first assignment with the Kenton County Attorney's Office was in the Division of Child Support Enforcement. She worked for over a decade in the child support division, handling both civil and criminal cases on behalf of the children of Kenton County.

During this tenure, Burke was also an assistant commonwealth's attorney, where she prosecuted felony nonsupport cases. As the daughter of a single mother, she understands the importance of child support to the lives of children throughout the commonwealth.

Burke has mentored young prosecutors throughout her tenure. She has served as faculty at the National Advocacy Center in South Carolina and at the Kentucky Prosecutor's Institute.

From 2001 to 2018, she also served as an adjunct faculty member at Northern Kentucky University. Burke attended Eastern Kentucky University and the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University. She resides in and is a native of Grant County.



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**Christine
Russell**

**VP of Strategy,
BE NKY**

**Executive Director,
NKY Port Authority**

LINDSEY BURKE
KY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Lindsey Burke, a Lexington native, serves as the Democratic state representative for Kentucky's 75th House District. She previously was minority whip in the House caucus and recently was elected minority caucus chair.

Since taking office on Jan. 1, 2023, Burke has been vocal on issues such as access to justice, affordable housing, and reproductive and maternal-health rights.

She holds a B.S in social work from Florida State University, a Master of Arts in social service administration from the University of Chicago, and a juris doctor from the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

Beginning her career as a social worker, she pivoted into law. In law school, she earned the Public Service Award for the Class of 2012. She was chosen by the graduates of the University of Cincinnati College of Law to receive their 2025 Alumni Achievement Award.

In 2017, Burke founded the nonprofit law firm Micah Legal in Lexington. Micah Legal provides sliding-scale civil legal services for individuals and families of moderate to low incomes. The Kentucky Bar Association Young Lawyers Division honored Burke for service to the community, and she was the Fayette County Bar Association's 2023 Outstanding Young Lawyer. She serves on the American Bar Association Committee for Legal Assistance to Military Personnel. She is a Kentucky Colonel and an elder at her church. Burke lives in Lexington with her attorney husband, Spencer Mancillas, and their two young children, Ewan and Finn.



BRANDY CANTOR
MML&K GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

Brandy Cantor, a Frankfort native, has nearly two decades of experience in government relations. In 2004, Cantor joined the team at MML&K Government Solutions. While she has expertise in a broad array of policy areas, including insurance, technology, budget policy, public protection, and more, her focus is on health care and children's issues.

Prior to joining MML&K Government Solutions, Cantor worked for the Kentucky Cabinet for Health Services. During her tenure, she served as the executive assistant to secretary of the cabinet and also as a resource management analyst for the Division of Policy and Financial Management. In those roles, she was involved in a wide range of issues touching almost every department within the cabinet, including Medicaid, pharmacy, contracting, and budget.

In addition to lobbying, Cantor serves as the executive director of the Kentucky Association of Hospice and Palliative Care, which is based in Frankfort.

Cantor graduated cum laude from the University of Kentucky, with a bachelor's degree in business management and marketing. Today, she still calls Frankfort her home with her husband and two sons.





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**SARAH
BOWLING**

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in Kentucky Government & Politics in 2025

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SLOANE SKINNER CARLOUGH DICKINSON WRIGHT

Sloane Skinner Carlough is an attorney at Dickinson Wright in Lexington, where she provides counsel in campaign finance and election law, government ethics, lobbying compliance, pay-to-play compliance, and tax-exempt organizations. She helps officeholders, candidates, political committees, corporations, nonprofits, and donors navigate the complex laws governing the political and campaign process.

Prior to rejoining Dickinson Wright in 2024, she worked for several years in Washington D.C., where she held various positions. She worked for the vice chair of the Federal Election Commission, which is the agency charged with administering and enforcing federal campaign finance law.

Prior to the FCC, she served as the deputy general counsel at the National Republican Congressional Committee. At the NRCC she advised members of Congress and candidates on campaign finance and ethics rules.

Carlough also worked for the Republican National Committee and the Republican Governors Association.

She received her J.D. from the University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law in 2016 and her bachelor's degree from Lee University, where she graduated magna cum laude and was an All-American golfer.

Carlough was raised in Nicholasville, where she now resides with her husband, Chadwick, and their two children. She enjoys gardening, golfing, cooking for her family, and of course, politics.



EMILY CHILDERS AGENTIS MANAGEMENT

Emily Childers is executive vice president for Agentis Management and serves as the executive director for three statewide associations, where she leads strategic initiatives, advances member priorities, and works closely with policymakers to ensure Kentucky professionals have the resources, representation, and support they need to thrive.

Throughout her career, Childers has championed issues important to Kentuckians by collaborating with state agencies, legislators, and community partners to promote policies that advance the missions of the associations she represents. She is known for her thoughtful, solutions-driven leadership – balancing innovation with practicality – and for fostering environments where members feel heard, supported, and empowered. Her strengths in communication, relationship-building, and navigating complex challenges have made her a trusted voice within Kentucky's association management community.

A proud graduate of Eastern Kentucky University, Childers holds a degree in communication, which has strengthened her work in advocacy, organizational leadership, and public engagement. Her education and experience prepared her to guide organizations through growth, transitions, and statewide initiatives while cultivating trust and collaboration. Residing in Versailles, Childers remains deeply committed to her community and the commonwealth. She chairs a memorial fund established in honor of her son, Henry, which supports youth and children in Woodford County, a role that reflects her dedication to creating opportunities and meaningful impact for young people.



KELSEY COOPER OFFICE OF U.S. SEN. RAND PAUL

Kelsey Cooper serves as senior adviser to U.S. Sen. Rand Paul. For more than 10 years, she has played an integral part in developing and implementing the senator's communications strategy in Kentucky and Washington.

Prior to her current role, Cooper served as the senator's deputy chief of staff for communications, overseeing and directing the communications teams for both his personal office and committee office (Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs), which he now chairs.

She is an experienced and battle-tested campaign and communications professional, with several Senate and presidential races under her belt, and has done extensive work as an on-the-record spokesperson in print and on television. She truly enjoys working with the press and building long-lasting relationships that help bring Dr. Paul's message to Kentuckians and the American people.

As her career has grown, so has her love for mentoring other young women in politics. Whether through internships, coffees, or making introductions, Cooper believes strongly in opening doors for other women entering the political communications arena, no matter their ideology, and credits her mentors Dan Schnur and Sarah Pompei for teaching her how to always pay it forward. A Los Angeles native, she is a graduate of the University of California-Berkeley with a B.A. in political science.

In her free time, she enjoys taking long walks with her husband, Dylan, and the new baby girl they welcomed earlier this year.



NATALIE CUNNINGHAM KyPOLICY

Natalie Cunningham is the outreach director at the Berea-based Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, Kentucky's premier policy research and advocacy organization.

With her facilitation, event planning, strategy, and organizing skills, she works to educate Kentuckians on public policy's direct effect on their lives, integrate KyPolicy's research with the lived experience of Kentucky's people, and empower people to have their voices heard in the legislature.

In 2023, she spearheaded the creation of KyPolicy's Summer Policy Institute. In this four-day experience, students learn about policy issues facing Kentucky, meet with legislators and others working in the policy field, and deliver their own policy solutions. SPI works to inspire and equip the next generation of Kentucky policy professionals.

She started her career as an Americorps VISTA with the Lexington Rescue Mission. Through her work at the mission, she developed a deep dedication to work that helps others thrive and enriches communities. This dedication was demonstrated in her community collaborations at the Mooris Book Shop, board leadership and director at Local First Lexington, and eventually in a split position with the Small Business Development Center and the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky.

She lives in Lexington, where she enjoys supporting organizations like CivicLex, Lexington Art League, and the League of Women Voters. An artist in her own right, she spends much of her free time gardening, quilting, and on other creative endeavors.



KARYN CZAR
91.3 WUKY

Karyn Czar is an award-winning journalist with Lexington's National Public Radio affiliate, 91.3 WUKY. Along with anchoring newscasts during "Morning Edition," Czar is a network correspondent, focusing on local and statewide breaking news. Her coverage of the devastating tornadoes in Western Kentucky in 2021 and the deadly flooding in Eastern Kentucky in 2022 brought lifesaving information to the communities hit by these disasters and provided a global audience with guidance on how to assist victims.

Czar regularly covers state politics, including the Kentucky General Assembly and Gov. Andy Beshear's weekly Team Kentucky press briefings. She was a daily presence during the COVID pandemic, ensuring that public questions were delivered and answered by state officials and medical experts. Czar has received several Associated Press Awards, PMJ honors, and more than a dozen Edward R. Murrow awards for journalism excellence.

Along with her career in news, Czar is a professional actress, performing with several theatres in the region, including The Lexington Theatre Company, an experienced company with the mission of integrating local talent with rising professionals and Broadway artists. She most recently portrayed Maggie in "42nd Street" and Mrs. Fezziwig in "A Christmas Carol" at the Lexington Opera House.

Czar is a graduate of the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Her secret dream is to play the Fairy Godmother in the Walt Disney parade.



SARAH DURAND
TACTILE BLOOM

Sarah Durand has spent more than 15 years as an activist and community leader. She is the founder and CEO of Tactile Bloom, a data-driven strategic communications and public affairs firm specializing in advocacy, policy development, and coalition building. Tactile Bloom is based in Prospect.

Durand served five years as the government affairs director for the Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions, leading efforts to gain policy wins at Kentucky's capitol.

She has a wide range of campaign experience, from state House campaigns to serving on Gov. Matt Bevin's successful 2015 campaign. After the election of Bevin, Durand served as chief of staff for Kentucky First Lady Glenna Bevin.

Durand is a co-founder of the Kentucky Forum for Rights, Economics and Education, a nonprofit focused on advancing free-market policies at the state legislative level.

She is an award-winning court-appointed special advocate to Kentucky's abused and neglected children and serves on the board of Second Chance Strategies, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming lives by fostering leadership and integrity within the second-chance community.





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KAREN FINAN

ONENKY ALLIANCE

Karen Finan is president and CEO of the OneNKY Alliance, a group of regional business leaders that drives a strategic vision for the Northern Kentucky region.

The group's transformational vision on unity has resulted in development of the OneNKY Center, providing voice and alignment for growth organizations and community inclusive of LifeSciKY, as well as OneNKY Frankfort, which offers a community presence with policy makers. The OneNKY Alliance incubated and launched LINKnky, an independent multi-media news organization.

The annual OneNKY Summit, now in its eighth year, unites and mobilizes leaders around bold goals and initiatives, resulting in systemic change. The group recently launched EducateNKY to address the need for improved student outcomes.

Finan has received a number of recognitions, including 2025 Cincinnati Enquirer Woman of the Year, Horizon Community Funds' Executive of the Year, and the Northern Kentucky Business Hall of Fame. As part of her business and community involvement, Finan concurrently led the OneNKY Alliance and served as interim president and CEO of Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation (now BE NKY).

Finan holds a B.A. from Northern Kentucky University and chairs the Northern Kentucky University Foundation. She is vice chair of the Northern Kentucky Port Authority and is a board member of Easter Seals/Redwood Foundation and NKY Works.



ANNE MARIE FRANKLIN

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Anne Marie Franklin serves as the Governmental Affairs manager with the Kentucky Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture communications, public service, and leadership from the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, and her Master of Arts degree in agricultural extension and education from North Carolina State University.

As Farm Bureau's governmental affairs manager, she serves as the corporate liaison with regulatory authorities, monitors new legislation and regulatory developments on both the state and federal levels, and works to develop proactive legislation related to the insurance industry. She is also responsible for the integration of new legislation and regulations into the organization.

In her 10 years of experience in public policy and education, Franklin has focused on agricultural and environmental issues, working at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the Energy and Environment Cabinet as well as at the United States Department of Agriculture. She also spent time in the classroom, teaching agriculture education at the middle and high school level.

Additionally, Franklin served as a master teacher of agriculture education for N.C. State University and was named the 2020 Conservation Secondary Education Teacher of the Year for North Carolina. Franklin has a strong passion for agricultural advocacy and protecting the assets of farm families. She and her husband, Jacob, reside in Franklin County.



JENNIFER GINN

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Jennifer Ginn is serving in her second year as director of communications in the Office of the Commissioner at the Kentucky Department of Education. She held various roles in the Division of Communications since joining KDE in 2015. The Division of Communications handles all internal and external communications, community relations and outreach, public relations, graphics, social media, marketing, and emergency and crisis communications for the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Board of Education. The division manages or helps support awards programs, such as the Kentucky Teacher of the Year, National Blue Ribbon Schools, Milken Educator Awards, and the Kentucky Education Support Staff Professional Award.

In 2023, Ginn received the Kevin M. Noland-Mary Ann Miller Award from the Kentucky Board of Education. The award recognizes a KDE employee for significant service to Kentucky's public schools and for providing inspiration for education. She also has received the Strategic Excellence and Achievement Award for Collaboration, which is given by the commissioner to select Team KDE members on a monthly basis.

Prior to joining KDE, Ginn spent 10 years at The Council of State Governments, working in health policy, education policy, and with the agency's publications. She started her professional life working in newspapers in Arkansas, Mississippi, Ohio and across Kentucky. Ginn, a native of Kentucky, earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from the University of Mississippi. She and her husband live in Winchester with their two sons.



KATE WOOD HALL

COMMONWEALTH ALLIANCES

Kate Wood Hall has worked in Kentucky politics and government for more than 18 years and has been a member of the Commonwealth Alliances team for more than 12. She is a partner along with Patrick Jennings, Collin Johnson, and Julia Bright.

Hall focuses on education, health care, technology and budget policy, and has expertise in a broad array of policy areas.

She began her work in politics in 2004 as a field organizer in congressional races in Alabama and as a PAC director for minority leadership in the Virginia House of Delegates. Throughout that time, Hall continued to grow her relationships in Kentucky by working as a fundraising event consultant for the Kentucky Democratic Party.

In 2007, Hall decided to fully return to her home state to work as deputy finance director for candidates running for governor of Kentucky. Eventually, she served for seven years as Gov. Steve Beshear's legislative liaison and director of the Governor's Office of Legislative Services before joining Commonwealth Alliances.

Earlier this year, Hall was named the vice chair of the Kentucky Democratic Party.

Hall earned a B.A. in political science from Transylvania University in 2004 and was a Hansard Scholar at the London School of Economics in 2003. In 2013, she completed her MBA at the University of Louisville College of Business. She and her husband, David, live in Louisville and are the proud parents of three children.



ERIKA HANCOCK
KY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Erika Hancock is the state representative for Kentucky's 57th House District and a longtime small-business owner known for pragmatic, people-first leadership.

A graduate of the University of Kentucky with a bachelor's degree in integrated strategic communication, Hancock became one of the youngest female State Farm agents in the country when she assumed Sallye Hill Stumbo's agency in 2001. Two decades of advising families and small businesses on risk and planning inform her policy approach in Frankfort. Through her years in business, Hancock has learned that the best way to deal with a difficult person isn't to talk at them but to talk with them.



Hancock was selected by The Council of State Governments to be part of the prestigious Center for Advanced Leadership Skills 2025 program. A hands-on community volunteer, Hancock has served on boards for United Way and the Sunshine Center, on the Site-Based Decision-Making Council at Bondurant Middle School, and on the finance committee at First United Methodist Church. She describes her public service as the natural next step in a life rooted in Frankfort: "It was time for me to transition from my supportive role in the community to a leadership role. I feel compelled to give back to the community that has given so much to me and my family." Hancock and her husband, Franklin County Clerk Jeff Hancock, have been married for 25 years. They are the proud parents of Pauli, a University of Louisville student, and Houston, a student at Frankfort High School.

REBECCA HARTSOUGH
BABBAGE COFOUNDER

Dr. Rebecca Hartsough is the senior policy director for Babbage Cofounder, where she develops and manages legislative and executive policy and public funding strategies for the Lexington firm.

Hartsough has had notable successes in economic development, infrastructure, health, education, energy, tourism, housing, justice, and technology policy sectors.

She is the leading lobbyist and a key developer for Kentucky's GRANT program, the \$200 million state initiative designed to revitalize economically distressed areas. The GRANT Program has been cited by national policy think tanks and philanthropic foundations as a model now replicated in 13 states. Hartsough has been instrumental in the development and funding of Public Health Transformation, which has been hailed as the national gold standard for public health departments.



Prior to her advocacy career, Hartsough taught extensively as a political science and public policy lecturer and an adjunct professor at the University of Kentucky. She also worked in the private sector as a data scientist, voting-behavior specialist, health-care consultant, and forensic financial analyst. She has had several government posts, the most significant being in the White House Correspondence Office of former first lady Laura Bush.

Hartsough holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in political science and quantitative methods from Emory University, where she completed a B.A. in political science and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. An Owensboro native, she lives with her family in Louisville.

Congratulations to these notable women from our team!



**AMANDA
BUNNING
KELSEY**

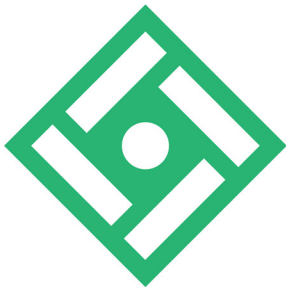
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ROBBIN HIGGINS**KY DEPT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

A retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel with over 20 years of active duty, Dr. Robbin Higgins serves on the Governor's Advisory Board in the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. She received her commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Signal Corps from the Eastern Kentucky University Reserve Officers' Training Corps program.

Higgins has had a varied military career, with tours of duty in places around the globe, including Germany, Saudi Arabia, Alaska, Hawai'i, and here in Kentucky at Fort Knox.

During the course of her honorable service, Higgins earned many awards and decorations, including: Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal; Meritorious Service Medal; Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal; and Afghanistan Campaign Medal. She is a member of the KDVA Women Veterans Coordinating Committee, a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and others, and she is a Kentucky Colonel. She also volunteers and dedicates time to various church ministries.

Higgins holds a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Eastern Kentucky University, a master's degree in general administration from Central Michigan University, and a Doctorate of Education in educational leadership from Northern Kentucky University. A native of Falmouth, Higgins lives in Villa Hills.

**TRINA HUSTON****BOURBON COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT**

Trina Huston was first elected as the Bourbon County Circuit Court clerk in 2018, but the journey that led her there started long before she ever stepped into public office.

A native of Madison County, her introduction to the legal field began in 1994 when she moved to Bourbon County and accepted a position with attorney Harry E. Budden Jr. Under his guidance, she gained a foundation of invaluable knowledge in the legal profession and developed a deep respect for the responsibilities that come with that knowledge.

She later continued her career as a paralegal for her good friend and respected colleague, William Joseph "Joe" Fooks, then a family law attorney and now a family court judge. Those years shaped not only her understanding of the law, but also her desire to one day serve Bourbon County as its circuit court clerk. Beyond her professional responsibilities, she's an active member of several organizations, including The Circuit Court Clerks Trust for Life, the Bourbon County Republican Party, and she volunteers for community groups and activities. She recently was asked to serve on the Child Fatality Review Board and on the Opioid Abatement Advisory Committee. Community involvement has always been at the heart of her work.

One of her favorite traditions each year is organizing the Lincoln Day Dinner. Watching this event grow continues to be one of the most rewarding parts of her community involvement.

**GRACIE KELLY****KENTUCKY LEAGUE OF CITIES**

Gracie Kelly is the director of Government Affairs for the Kentucky League of Cities, where she leads the league's legislative strategy and advocacy before the Kentucky General Assembly and the Kentucky executive branch. She oversees the development of KLC's policy agenda, coordinates stakeholder engagement, and advances legislation that strengthens Kentucky's cities and enhances quality of life. Prior to joining KLC, Kelly served in multiple roles at the Kentucky Association of Counties, most recently as associate director of government affairs. In that role, she directed advocacy efforts on behalf of county officials, analyzed complex state and federal legislation, and built strong relationships with legislative leaders, executive branch officials, and local government partners. She began her career through legislative and research positions with the Kentucky House of Representatives and the University of Louisville's Legislative Internship Program.

A native of Custer, in Breckinridge County, Kelly earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Louisville and her juris doctor from Northern Kentucky University's Salmon P. Chase College of Law. She attended law school at night while working full-time in government affairs and passed the Kentucky Bar Exam with a score ranking in the top 10% nationally. During law school, she served as a student ambassador, mentor, and member of the Diversity Council. Kelly and her husband, who is also in government affairs, live on a New Liberty farm with their Border Collie, Cub.

**AMANDA BUNNING KELSEY****THE INGRAM GROUP**

Amanda Bunning Kelsey began her career in Washington D.C. working in the leadership office of U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell, but her experience in politics began much earlier: She is the granddaughter of former U.S. Sen. and baseball hall-of-famer Jim Bunning.

Kelsey has over 10 years of experience working on a variety of policy issues and priorities at the highest levels. She services a diverse set of clients, including: maintaining beneficial relationships; developing effective messaging; preparing clients for congressional meetings, hearings, and testimony; and activating grassroots campaigns or coalition building. Kelsey is able to identify problems quickly and produce a written work product that can be shared with the legislative staff and used by clients. Her energy, responsiveness, and proactiveness are unparalleled, and she brings strong communication skills and a well-developed reputation to The Ingram Group and its clients.

Before The Ingram Group, Kelsey was director of government affairs for the American Conservative Union, which sponsors one of the largest and most influential political conferences in the nation, CPAC. There, she managed the ACU Foundation's ratings of Congress and all state legislatures, and the coordination of policy discussions. In addition, she managed the ACU Political Action Committee and candidate endorsements. Prior to ACU, Kelsey served on the government affairs team for Anheuser-Busch Companies. She is a native of Lexington, Kentucky and a graduate of the University of Georgia.



BRITTANEY KING
BROGHAMER COMPLIANCE

Brittaney King is director of operations at Broghamer Compliance, a full-service, nationally recognized Republican political compliance consulting firm based in Newport. She has established herself as a trusted expert in navigating the complex landscape of campaign reporting and regulatory strategy.

A Murray State University graduate, King brings over a decade of experience in political campaign compliance and finance.

Throughout her career, King has supported political campaigns from local and state races to federal committees. While her portfolio includes a wide range of clients, much of her work has focused on federal campaigns and PACs. Her extensive knowledge of Federal Election Commission regulations ensures strict compliance and sound financial management.

She has worked on statewide campaigns in multiple states, reliably interpreting complex statewide rules to keep her clients fully compliant. Her meticulous attention to detail and strategic oversight have made her an invaluable asset to campaigns seeking both integrity and efficiency. Through her work with Broghamer Compliance, King empowers candidates to focus on connecting with voters while she ensures everything behind the scenes runs smoothly and by the book.

King is treasurer of the Northern Kentucky Area Development District Board, and she is vice president of Welcome House Outreach, the fundraising arm of Welcome House.

She resides in Erlanger with her husband, Edwin, and their two children.



SHAYLA LYNCH
LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN CO. GOV'T

Councilmember Shayla Lynch was elected to office in November 2022 and again in 2024.

In her first year in office, she successfully sponsored two ordinances that reflect her strong commitment to equity – The CROWN Act (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) and Source of Income housing protections.

In 2025, she was appointed by the National League of Cities to the REAL Council, working on equity issues in city governments around the United States.

She is a proud native of Hopkinsville and a graduate of Centre College, where she earned degrees in English and government. She earned her juris doctor from the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville.

After law school, Lynch began her professional career with the Kentucky Fair Housing Council, where she advocated for housing equality for 15 years. She continued her work in the nonprofit space as the executive director for the Sexual Violence Resource Center of the Bluegrass (formerly Ampersand) and eventually, as the executive director for the renowned Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning.

Lynch is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. and served on the Lexington Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors for five years. She is a 2019 graduate of Leadership Lexington and, before her time as an elected official, she served on the Fayette County Public Schools' Equity Council and on the city's Neighborhoods in Transition Task Force, Ethics Commission.



Congratulations!

SAWYER NOEL

**Kentucky Chamber Vice President
of Communications and Marketing
recognized as a Notable Woman
in Politics and Government in 2025**



MANDY SIMPSON MARLER**BALDWIN CONSULTING**

Mandy Simpson Marler is a principal with Baldwin Consulting, a government affairs and nonprofit business-development firm with more than 50 years of combined experience in strengthening public policy environments to accelerate clients' missions. Driven by the results of pairing powerful community programming with transformative policymaking, she leverages the unique expertise of her firm and her clients to keep human service issues centered and prioritized at decision-making tables.

Her collaboration with lawmakers to improve childcare access has spanned successful efforts – from local zoning reform to establishment of the Kentucky Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership, from historic investment of local and state resources in affordability programs to early childhood educator supports. Her ongoing efforts to drive consensus and develop pragmatic solutions with legislative and executive branch leaders also extends to housing affordability, child welfare quality, and nonprofit sector impact.

Prior to joining Baldwin, Marler served as the first chief policy officer for Metro United Way in Louisville, where she spent eight years building an effectual public policy portfolio. Previously, she worked in print journalism, covering education and local government.

Marler is a proud Western Kentucky University graduate with bachelor's degrees in journalism and English literature. A lifelong Kentuckian, she and her husband, Chester, call both southwest Louisville and Covington home.

**SARA MASSEY****MCCARTHY STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS
KENTUCKY BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION**

Sara Massey is a strategic partner with McCarthy Strategic Solutions, and she serves as executive director of the Kentucky Beverage Association. She uses her nearly two decades of government relations experience to successfully advocate for MSS clients. As executive director for the Kentucky Beverage Association, Massey provides governance and strategic direction for legislative and regulatory priorities as well as initiatives for the non-alcoholic beverage industry.

Previously, she served as the executive director for the Kentucky Engineering Center, a trade association for Kentucky Professional Engineers. She oversaw the representation of nearly 1,000 professional engineers, 85 engineering firms, and more than 2,500 Kentucky employees.

For nearly a decade, Massey served as director of intergovernmental affairs for Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government under Mayor Greg Fischer, directing development of the mayor's legislative agenda and transportation funding requests.

She served on the Kentucky League of Cities Board of Directors, representing the mayor's office. She also worked in campaign finance for multiple statewide races. Massey is an Ignite Louisville graduate and a 2015 Louisville Business First's 40 Under 40 award recipient. Originally from Owensboro, Massey is a graduate of the University of Alabama. She resides in Louisville with her husband, TJ, and their two daughters.

**OLIVIA MCKOWN****HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF KY**

Olivia McKown serves as public affairs director for the Home Builders Association of Kentucky, where she helps manage governmental affairs activities and leads communications efforts to support the housing and building industry at local, state, and national levels. She holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in public policy and public administration from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, along with education credentials in U.S. and world history from Lipscomb University in Nashville.

Her passion for government and policy began with roles at the University of Tennessee's Office of Government Relations in Nashville and in Washington, D.C., serving in U.S. Sen. Bob Corker's office. She later worked for her home county's executive and in the University of Tennessee chancellor's office, followed by positions at the University of Kentucky, Georgetown College, and as deputy finance director for the Republican Party of Kentucky. Her career spans government, education, politics, and fundraising, with experience at the federal, state, and local levels.

McKown recently completed Leadership Kentucky's Elevate program and is an active member at Georgetown Baptist Church.

In her free time, she enjoys the arts and baking. She lives in Georgetown with her husband, Sam, and their daughter, Eliza.

**JENA BAKER MCNEILL****THE INGRAM GROUP**

Jena Baker McNeill joined The Ingram Group in 2025 after a diverse career spanning federal, state, and local politics. McNeill most recently served as the director of government and legislative relations at East Kentucky Power Cooperative. In this role, she advocated on behalf of EKPC and its 16 member cooperatives. McNeill helped build the Electric Cooperative Caucus, which became the largest legislative caucus in Frankfort.

Before moving to Kentucky, McNeill worked in national politics. This included as deputy chief of staff/legislative director to U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst.

McNeill previously lobbied for the U.S. Travel Association. In 2017, she was nominated for a Women in Government award for her advocacy on U.S. Travel's Open Skies campaign. She was named a George Washington University Fellow and has been featured in numerous media as well as in testimony before Congress and state legislatures. Her work was cited in Donald Trump's book "Time to Get Tough: Make America Great Again."

McNeill has a degree in environmental science from the University of Maryland, where she was an intern for then-Rep. (now Sen.) Shelley Moore Capito. She holds a juris doctor from the University of Arkansas Little Rock School of Law, where she clerked for the Senate Judiciary Committee and for former Gov. Asa Hutchinson.

McNeill lives in Lexington with her husband, Greg, adviser to Secretary of State Michael Adams, their son, Nixon, and their dog, C-Span.



LIBBY MILLIGAN
MCCARTHY STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

Libby Milligan has two decades of experience at both the federal and state levels of government.

She is a principal at McCarthy Strategic Solutions, a bipartisan government affairs firm in Frankfort. The firm engages its strength of relationships and expertise to advocate with integrity, efficiency, and respect for its clients to achieve desired results.

With extensive experience in legislation and regulatory analysis, Milligan represents multiple clients within the health-care sector and presents related issues to the Kentucky General Assembly and Kentucky's executive branch.

Prior to joining McCarthy Strategic Solutions, Milligan began her career as executive assistant to former Kentucky 6th District Congressman Ernie Fletcher in his district office. Following the 2003 general election, Milligan worked as an aide to Gov.-elect Fletcher during his transition. She then went on to serve as a special assistant to the governor for administration and legislation under Fletcher.

As a member of the governor's senior policy committee, Milligan developed a broad range of policy initiatives, policy analyses, and coordinated legislation.

Milligan is a member of the Junior League of Louisville, where she previously served on the board and was involved in numerous community projects. A graduate of the University of Kentucky, Milligan and her husband reside in Louisville, with their son.



SAWYER COFFEY NOEL
KENTUCKY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Sawyer Coffey Noel is vice president of Communications and Marketing for the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, overseeing the organization's strategic communications, brand management, and marketing efforts. She leads the team that works across the organization to promote policy priorities, programs, and initiatives, as well as events. In her role, she also delivers member communications, drives media relations and advertising, and manages "The Bottom Line" news information site.

Noel joined the chamber in 2017 as the manager of communications. Since then, she has played an instrumental role in transforming and elevating the organization's communications efforts.

Her work has earned national recognition by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives for communications excellence, and Ragan Communications named her a Top Woman in Communications in 2024.

She is a graduate of Western Kentucky University and previously worked at the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce.



Congratulations to
SHANNON STIGLITZ



The Kentucky Gazette
**2025 NOTABLE WOMEN IN KENTUCKY
POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT HONOREE**

*Thank you for all you do to support
Kentucky's retail community!*



SARA OSBORNE**MML&K GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS**

Sara Osborne has been with MML&K Government Solutions since 2013. As the former executive director for the Office of Intergovernmental Services in the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, Osborne brings a strong insight into the state's legislative process to the government relations team.

Through her prior work experience, Osborne has been directly involved with Kentucky state government's various cabinets, agencies and the governor's office. Prior to her position as executive director for the Office of Intergovernmental Services, Osborne was the director of Business Services and legislative liaison for the Office of the Secretary of State. She also spent a year and a half with the Department for Local Government.

Osborne has had the rare opportunity to work under two different gubernatorial administrations in separate states: She has played important roles for both former Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear's office and the former Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen's administration.

She graduated from Centre College with a B.A. in government and a minor in religion.

Osborne was selected and served as a delegate for Kentucky to the 2020 and 2024 Democratic National Conventions. In June 2025, she was selected and now serves as a member of leadership for the Kentucky Democratic Party.

**DINA PARROTT****KY DEPT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

SMSgt. Dina Parrott was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She joined the U.S. Air Force in 1994 and served admirably on active duty for 25 years.

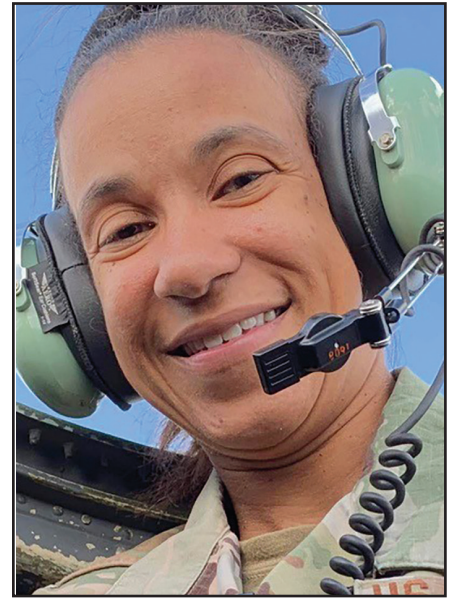
She was assigned to several bases, including the Pentagon, and NATO Combined Air Operations Centre in Uedem, Germany. She deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan as part of Combat Search and Rescue special operations unit, and Camp Asaylah, Qatar on a joint special operations Crisis Response Element.

Parrott retired in 2019 as senior master sergeant, flight chief of the 27th Special Operations Communications Flight. During this time, she completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in information technology.

Before joining the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, Parrott enjoyed volunteering with the Frederick Douglass High School PTA, God's Pantry, and Southland Church in Lexington.

While volunteering at the annual "Taste of the Bluegrass" event, Dina's husband, Mark, met and introduced her to the chief of staff of KDVA, who said the agency was looking for a Women Veterans Program administrator. Intrigued, Parrott applied, underwent two rounds of interviews, and was ultimately selected. Since then, she has been filled with purpose in continuing to serve others and proudly serving women veterans in various capacities.

She was one of several women veterans featured in a June story in the Lexington Herald-Leader that focused on the leadership and service of the vets, noting "service was a way of life" for Parrott.

**BRITTANY M. ROETHEMEIER****FAYETTE ALLIANCE**

Brittany M. Roethemeier is executive director of Fayette Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to achieving smart, sustainable, and equitable growth in Lexington-Fayette County. Through local government advocacy, educational programming, and independent research, Fayette Alliance works to positively impact local zoning and development policies, while preserving the unique and productive Bluegrass farmland surrounding the city – vital to a better quality of life, economy, and environment. Since joining in 2019, Roethemeier has worked on policies ranging from infill and redevelopment to protection of prime agricultural land from sprawl development, expanded programming to empower local advocates, brought in national speakers on urban planning, championed research to inform local policy, and increased the reach of the organization throughout Fayette County. Previously, Roethemeier practiced real estate law at McBrayer, where she was named a Super Lawyer – Rising Star in Real Estate in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

She has been a passionate volunteer and board member of numerous nonprofit organizations in Lexington, including Step by Step, EMERGE Conference Steering Committee, and is a graduate of the Leadership Lexington Class of 2014-15. She currently serves on the advisory board of Blue Grass Community Foundation 365 and 100 Women.

Originally from Union, Roethemeier is a graduate of Transylvania University and the University of Kentucky College of Law, and lives in Lexington with her husband, Dean, and rescue dogs, Henry and Louis.

**KIMBERLY ROSSETTI****BE NKY**

Kimberly Rossetti is vice president of Economic Development for BE NKY Growth Partnership. She leads BE NKY's economic development team, which is focused on attracting new businesses to Northern Kentucky and helping the existing companies grow and expand.

Her team works with elected officials and leaders in Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties, community partners, REDI Cincinnati, and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development in helping companies make the significant business decision of investing in the region.

Rossetti joined the BE NKY team in August 2019. Since 2020, Kimberly and her team have won 115 projects, representing nearly \$1.7 billion in capital investment and 8,656 new jobs announced. She has been a member of the Kentucky Association for Economic Development for 20 years and was elected to its board of directors in November 2020.

Additionally, Rossetti serves on the board of directors of the Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board. In 2022, she was appointed to the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky's Board of Directors. She is also a member of the Industrial Asset Management Council and International Economic Development Council.

Prior to joining BE NKY, she most recently served as the vice president for economic development at Commerce Lexington.

Rossetti graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor of Arts in public relations and advertising.



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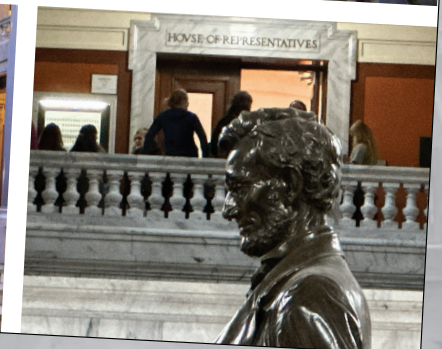


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Sponsorship opportunities are available. Visit KentuckyGazette.com/the-influence-network for details.

JENNIFER ROWE
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

Jennifer Rowe brings over 25 years of experience in budgeting, finance, and public policy across Kentucky’s legislative, executive, and local governments. Raised in the mountains of Pike County, she saw early how decisions in Frankfort shape real communities. Those roots instilled in her a lifelong belief that government must be both compassionate and accountable – values that continue to guide her work.

As a budget director in the Senate Majority Caucus Budget Office, Rowe serves as an essential resource to Senate President Robert Stivers, Appropriations and Revenue Committee Chair Chris McDaniel, and the rest of the Senate majority leadership team. She plays a central role in crafting and negotiating the commonwealth’s \$119 billion biennial budget, providing strategic direction and technical expertise that support the caucus through the budget process. Known for her extensive expertise of complex financial issues, she is a trusted voice during the most high-pressure moments of the budget process.

Formerly, as a fiscal analyst in the Legislative Research Commission, she evaluated state agency budgets and operations for fiscal soundness and efficiency, and, at the Kentucky Department of Education, she analyzed the fiscal impacts of legislative proposals and oversaw the \$4 billion SEEK funding formula, ensuring the fair and accurate distribution of resources to all 171 school districts. Throughout her career, Rowe has championed data-driven decision-making, transparency, and equity.



CHRISTINE RUSSELL
BE NKY

Christine Russell is the vice president of strategy for BE NKY Growth Partnership. In this role, she is responsible for defining and implementing the strategic direction of the organization as well as managing the day-to-day operations and finances.

As a BE NKY employee, she also serves as the executive director of the Northern Kentucky Port Authority, which is leading several major projects, including the construction of the OneNKY Center and SparkHaus.

Russell previously served as economic development director for Springdale, Ohio, where she focused on expanding the economic base of the city. Her work resulted in \$120 million in additional payroll and over 1,350 new or retained jobs in Springdale.

In her former roles with Hull & Associates and the Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority, Russell secured over \$14 million in grant funding that led to the cleanup and redevelopment of 11 contaminated brownfield sites in southwestern Ohio.

Russell has held leadership positions in several professional organizations including Commercial Real Estate Women and the Urban Land Institute. She is the winner of the 2016 CREW Leadership Award, serves on ULI’s national Public/Private Partnership Council, is a graduate of Leadership Cincinnati and serves on the board for Tri-State Trails.

She has a Bachelor of Arts from Brown University and a Master of Science from the University of Findlay.



Relationships • Strategy • Success



Libby Milligan



Sara Massey



Amy Wickliffe



Megan Arnold

Congratulations to the Notable Women of Our Team

REGAN SATTERWHITE

KENTUCKY COUNCIL

ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

A native of Frankfort, Regan Satterwhite is a graduate of the University of Kentucky, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Career and Technical Education and a master's degree in educational leadership.

Satterwhite began her career in the classroom, teaching career and technical education for nine years. During that time, she chaired her department and became known for her commitment to student-centered learning, program innovation, and strong partnerships with local employers and community organizations. Her passion for improving educational pathways led her to the Kentucky Department of Education, first as a program manager and later as the CTE policy adviser. In those roles, she helped shape and support transformative legislation, including outcomes-based funding for CTE.

Today, Satterwhite is director of government relations for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. In this capacity, she advocates for policies that increase postsecondary access, affordability, and success. She advises members of the General Assembly, represents the interests of students and Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions, and works to advance legislation that builds a stronger, more educated workforce for the commonwealth.

Rooted deeply in her hometown, Satterwhite lives in Frankfort with her husband and two sons. She is proud to contribute to the place she has always called home.



LESLIE SIZEMORE

KENTUCKY COUNCIL

ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Dr. Leslie Sizemore brings more than 30 years of health-care and leadership experience to her role as vice president for Workforce and Economic Development at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education.

A licensed occupational therapist, she serves as the administrative lead for the Healthcare Workforce Collaborative, Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund, and Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense Fund, all designed to build talent pipelines in high-need sectors.

Sizemore oversees several key initiatives, including Career Ladders in Mental and Behavioral Health I and II, prison education programs, and workforce development for film and television. She also shapes policy to expand educational access for students with differing abilities, first-generation learners, and those from rural communities.

She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in occupational therapy, an education specialist degree from the University of Kentucky, and a Ph.D. in leadership from the University of the Cumberlands.

In addition to her public service, Sizemore owns and operates TheraCare, a private therapy staffing company serving Southeastern Kentucky for nearly three decades. She also serves on the Statewide Workforce and Talent Team, the Kentucky Nuclear Development Authority, and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services Institutional Review Board.



Congratulations!

**SARAH
VAN WALLAGHEN**

**2025 NOTABLE WOMEN IN KENTUCKY
POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**



Government Relations • Business Development

HOLLIE SPADE AT&T

Hollie Spade has been the director of External and Legislative Affairs for AT&T Kentucky since 2015.

Prior to joining AT&T, Spade served in the Cabinet for Economic Development during the Gov. Paul Patton administration, the Gov. Ernie Fletcher administration, and the Gov. Steve Beshear administration. She also was a partner in the law firm of Hazelrigg and Cox in Frankfort, where she practiced corporate, administrative, and domestic law.

Spade currently serves on the boards of Jobs for America's Graduates Kentucky, Kentucky Chamber Foundation, and she is a trustee of the Baptist Seminary of Kentucky.

She previously served on the boards of Kentucky CASA Network, Kentucky Nonprofit Network, Frankfort Area Chamber Board of Directors, Scott County United, and Red Cross of the Bluegrass, as well as the Frankfort Independent Schools FRYSC program board. She was a member of Leadership Kentucky Class of 2024 (the best class ever!)

Spade was selected as one of the 2022 Notable Women in Kentucky Politics and Government by The Kentucky Gazette and as one of the Lane Report's Top Women in Business in 2014. A graduate of the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville, she received her B.A. from William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri.

Spade and her husband, Alan Spade, reside in Louisville with their spoiled dog, Max, and have two grown children, Yulie and Bailey, and a wonderful daughter-in-law, Hannah Sirkin Spade



SHANNON STIGLITZ KENTUCKY RETAIL FEDERATION

Shannon Stiglitz serves as the senior vice president of Government Affairs for the Kentucky Retail Federation, where she represents and supports retailers of all sizes in navigating Kentucky's complex legislative and regulatory environment. She leads the federation's advocacy efforts on a broad range of issues – including taxation, organized retail crime, consumer protection, and pharmacy policy – ensuring that the voice of retail is heard in Frankfort and beyond.

With more than 20 years of experience lobbying at the state, federal, and local levels, Stiglitz has built strong, trusted relationships with legislators and government officials. Her reputation for honesty, integrity, and effectiveness has made her a respected advocate in Kentucky's political and business communities.

In recent years, she has successfully championed multiple bills combating organized retail crime, and she collaborates with federation affiliate organizations in sectors, such as grocery, agribusiness, restaurant, and propane, to advance policies that support their success. Her wide-ranging portfolio keeps her engaged daily with legislators and stakeholders to promote the interests of the federation's members.

Before joining KRF, Stiglitz lobbied on education, health care, and energy policy. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Louisville.

She resides in Louisville with her husband, Garrett, and their three sons.



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LUCY A. VANMETER
FAYETTE CIRCUIT COURT

Judge Lucy A. VanMeter was elected to the Fayette Circuit Court in 2018 and presides over civil cases, felony criminal matters, and appeals from the Fayette District Court.

Her rules for service are: 1) be prepared and on time; 2) listen to the parties; 3) apply the law as it is written; 4) rule promptly; 5) ensure proceedings are fair to all involved; 6) in criminal cases, always consider the safety and security of the community and impose a consequence for actions.

Prior to serving on the bench, VanMeter was an equity partner with one of Kentucky's preeminent law firms, where she practiced law from 2001 to 2018. She was accountable to clients and learned how to win cases and be successful in the business of law. She also served on the firm's personnel committee, where she was responsible for recruiting and training new lawyers.

VanMeter was raised in Bourbon County and held her first job in the eighth grade, student teaching at the Town and Village School of Dance, where she began studying dance at the age of 3.

She graduated with honors from DePauw University and cum laude from University of Kentucky College of Law.

VanMeter is a lifelong Episcopalian, member of Christ Church Cathedral and is married to retired Chief Justice Laurance B. VanMeter, who served on Kentucky's Supreme Court.

Her passion is miniature dachshunds and hosting her friends and family.



SARAH VAN WALLAGHEN
THE ROTUNDA GROUP

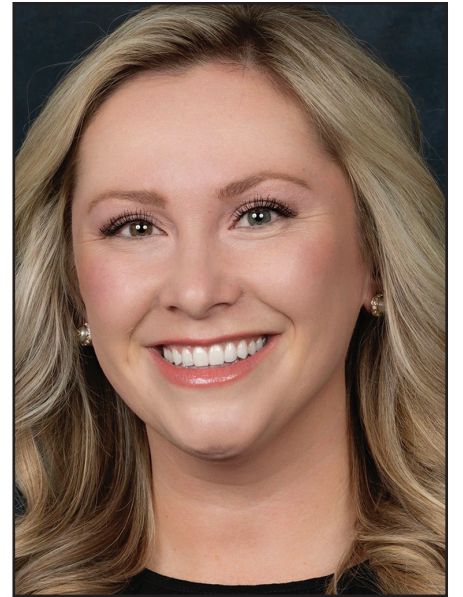
Sarah Van Wallaghen brings over a decade of expertise in political strategy, legislative affairs, and organizational leadership.

Known for her impactful tenure as executive director of the Republican Party of Kentucky, Van Wallaghen has been instrumental in advancing Kentucky's political landscape and strengthening conservative representation statewide.

Under her leadership, Republicans achieved historic milestones, including the takeover of the state House for the first time since 1921 and the expansion of a supermajority in the state Senate. Her efforts helped secure major statewide victories in multiple election cycles, broadening the party's reach throughout Kentucky. Van Wallaghen's path in political leadership includes her work as a field director for the Republican National Committee in Ohio during the 2012 presidential election, where she led large-scale grassroots mobilization in a critical swing state.

At The Rotunda Group, Van Wallaghen's deep understanding of the political landscape and her strong statewide relationships make her a valuable advocate for various industries and legislative initiatives.

Originally from Glasgow, she began her career in broadcast journalism with Commonwealth Broadcasting at age 16. She holds degrees in political science and broadcast journalism from the University of Kentucky and now lives in Louisville with her husband, Nick, their son and their rescue Collie.



Congratulations to
Rep. Erika Hancock
on her well-deserved
recognition as a
Notable Woman in
Kentucky Politics
and Government for 2025.

**We are proud to be
a part of Team Erika!**



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KATY VARNER
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Dr. Katy Varner says she was inspired by her father’s words to “help your community.” The mantra inspired her life.

She became a high school teacher and then a community college professor to fulfill this goal.

During the mid-1990s, she and two colleagues organized the American Federation of Teachers at the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. After three years of organizing, they had an active AFT union of about 1,000 members.

In 2001, Varner became the academic dean for the Southwest Campus of Jefferson Community and Technical College. She retired from JCTC in 2019.

A few years ago, she received calls from local AFT members and from AFT national, telling her AFT 1360 at the community college was in trouble and asking her to help revive it. This is now her goal as the executive director of AFT 1360. Membership and political activism are increasing.

Last year, AFT 1360 formed a coalition with the leaders of the American Association of University Professors from six public universities in Kentucky to fight a bill in the Kentucky General Assembly that would have ended tenure protection for university faculty.

The coalition viewed the end of tenure as the loss of millions of dollars of research grants and a threat to First Amendment Rights. After much discussion with many legislators and public figures, the coalition prevailed.



EMILY WHITE
BROGHAMER COMPLIANCE

Emily White is the director of accounting at Broghamer Compliance, a nationally recognized Republican political compliance consulting firm based in Newport. In this role, she oversees financial operations for congressional and statewide campaigns, PACs, and political organizations across the country.

A cum laude graduate of Morehead State University with a degree in accounting, White brings strong expertise in ensuring financial integrity across complex political operations. She collaborates closely with candidates and campaign teams to deliver strategic financial guidance and ensure strict adherence to federal and state regulations.

White began her political career at the grassroots level, supporting Republican candidates in Kentucky and nationwide. She serves as chair of the Rowan County Republican Party, youth chair of the Fifth Congressional District Republican Party, Kentucky’s national committeewoman to the Young Republican National Federation, and a member of its International Committee, collaborating with center-right parties abroad to advance shared conservative values.

White has appeared on KET and other Kentucky news outlets to discuss public policy and promote conservative candidates. In 2024, she was selected as one of the youngest delegates in the nation to represent Kentucky at the Republican National Convention, reflecting her leadership and commitment to advancing conservative principles on both the state and national stage. Recognized for her financial acumen and leadership, White represents a rising generation of conservative leaders in Kentucky.



Notable Women in Kentucky Politics and Government

Policy and Procedures

The Kentucky Gazette’s “Notable Women in Kentucky Politics and Government” is published annually with the help of our readers and our nominees. Here’s how we do it:

- Each year, we ask readers and social media followers to nominate women who work in Kentucky’s public affairs arena. Nominations for the 2025 edition opened in August 2025.
- Nominations are accepted from anyone, and self-nominations are accepted.
- Nominators are confidential.
- Nominations are vetted by staff and contractors of The Kentucky Gazette to ensure they meet these criteria: Notable Women must be top-level professionals in a public affairs position; they must work in Kentucky, for a Kentucky firm, or for a member of Kentucky’s delegation in Washington D.C.; and they must be currently serving in the role for which they are nominated.

- After selecting the Notable Women, The Kentucky Gazette sends each nominee a letter via the U.S. Postal Service, letting them know they have been selected. The letters ask nominees to submit a 250-word biography and a high-resolution head shot.
- The Kentucky Gazette staff edits biographies for clarity, style, and length only. *We do not fact check the nominees’ biographical claims.*
- The Kentucky Gazette staff crops photos for size consistency, and edits for color correction and clarity as necessary for quality, four-color printing.

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AMY WICKLIFFE
MCCARTHY STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

Amy Wickliffe, a partner at McCarthy Strategic Solutions, brings over 20 years of political and lobbying experience to the MSS team.

She has been lobbying the Kentucky General Assembly since 2005 and previously served as chief of staff to first lady Glenna Fletcher, statewide finance director for Gov. Ernie Fletcher, and she played key roles in various other political campaigns throughout her career.

Wickliffe's greatest strength lies in her ability to keep organizations strategically focused, craft effective messaging, and manage coalitions on behalf of clients.

With this expertise, she has been successful in leading some of the state's most well-known issue campaigns, including the passage of the state's largest workers' compensation reform since the 1990s, a constitutional amendment securing rights for victims of crime, and comprehensive energy legislation aimed at ensuring affordable, reliable energy by recognizing the essential role that coal plays in the commonwealth's energy mix and local economies.

She holds a B.A. in psychology from Transylvania University and an MBA from Midway University.



SARAH WOOD
BABBAGE COFOUNDER

Sarah Wood serves as policy director at Babbage Cofounder, where she leads advocacy and legislative strategy for clients in health care, aviation and aerospace, economic development, and education.

She also serves as executive vice president of the Kentucky Academy of Family Physicians, overseeing the organization's operations, strategic initiatives, and statewide advocacy on behalf of Kentucky's family physicians.

Her work spans association management, coalition leadership, and legislative strategy at the state and national levels. Wood helped develop and pass legislation in three states to lower prescription drug costs, and she supported statewide advocacy campaigns in aviation and workforce development. She has presented before legislative committees, policy conferences, and national forums, earning respect for her ability to make complex issues understandable and actionable. In Frankfort, she is a trusted source for legislators and local leaders on access, affordability, and statewide development initiatives. In Washington, Wood has worked on major issues impacting agriculture production and farming.

Before joining Babbage Cofounder, Wood spent a year in Ukraine on a Fulbright Fellowship. After returning to the U.S., she worked as a research analyst and interned at the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security Fusion Center. She holds a master's in international relations and diplomacy from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce at the University of Kentucky, where she now serves on the board of advisers, and a bachelor's in Russian and strategic communication from UK.



Congratulations to The Kentucky Gazette's
Notable Women in Politics & Government 2025

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**JUDGE
LUCY FERGUSON
VANMETER**

for being recognized
as one of the

2025
Notable Women
in Kentucky
Politics and
Government

